



***United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
MARVIN SMILON, HERBERT HADAD,  
MICHAEL KULSTAD  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**U.S. CHARGES MOSQUE DIRECTOR, OTHERS IN SCHEME  
TO OBTAIN RELIGIOUS VISAS, FALSE SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and EDWARD J. McELROY, the District Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS") in New York announced the unsealing today in Manhattan federal court of a two-count criminal Complaint charging MUHAMMAD KHALIL, AKHLAQ AHMED, ISHRAT LNU and ASIM KHALIL with conspiring to submit false applications on behalf of aliens to the INS's Religious Worker Program in order to obtain work visas.

KHALIL and MOHAMMAD AMIN AHMAD are also charged with conspiring to obtain false Social Security cards.

According to the Complaint, KHALIL is the Imam and director of the Dar Ehya Essunnah mosque (the "Mosque"), located in a section of the basement of Ditmas Greeting Cards, a variety and greeting card store at 511 Ditmas Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. Since 1993, as director of the Mosque, KHALIL has sponsored over 200 applications for aliens seeking to obtain

immigrant and non-immigrant work visas through the INS's Religious Worker program. In 2001 alone, KHALIL sponsored approximately 134 Religious Worker applications.

As explained in the Complaint, aliens with religious training and experience can obtain work visas - and ultimately green cards - if religious organizations in the United States, such as mosques, sponsor them under the INS's Religious Worker program. To qualify for the Religious Worker visas, the aliens, among other things, must be in the United States solely to engage in religious employment, must have received a job offer as a religious worker and must not be working in any secular employment.

According to the Complaint, KHALIL filed fraudulent paperwork with the INS for numerous non-religious workers to obtain Religious Worker visas for which the aliens were not eligible in exchange for fees ranging from \$5,000 to \$8,000.

As explained in the Complaint, KHALIL also agreed to prepare and submit a Religious Worker application for a cooperating witness (the "CW") in exchange for \$6,500, even though the CW did not have any religious training and even though KHALIL knew that the CW had a non-religious job. KHALIL provided the CW with sample documents that showed the type of religious education, training and experience that should be included in an application to the Religious Worker program. KHALIL told the CW to use the samples to create documents for the CW's application

to the Religious Worker program, it was charged.

According to the Complaint, ISHRAT LNU and AKLAQ AHMED would meet the CW at Syed Professional Services in Brooklyn, New York, where they agreed to assist the CW in obtaining false religious documents for use in the Religious Worker application. Among the fake documents AHMED allegedly fabricated and provided to the CW were a diploma from the University of the Punjab, an intermediate school degree and a certificate in Islamic studies and a Nazra Qaran certificate. AHMED told the CW that he would use a Pakistani typewriter and paper so that the documents would appear genuine, it was charged.

As explained in the Complaint, ASIM KHALIL ("Asim") - who is MUHAMMAD KHALIL's son - also assisted the CW in preparing fake documents for the Religious Worker application and instructed the CW to make changes to certain documents to reflect additional religious worker experience and to increase the number of children that the CW was falsely claiming to be tutoring in Islamic studies.

According to the Complaint, KHALIL and MOHAMMAD AMIN AHMAD also agreed to obtain false Social Security cards for the CW in exchange for \$2,300. Ultimately, KHALIL allegedly provided the CW with a real Social Security card issued by the Social Security Administration in the name of "Amjad Ali Chaudhry."

If convicted, MUHAMMAD KHALIL, AKHLAQ AHMED, ISHRAT LNU and ASIM KHALIL each face a maximum term of 5 years in prison on

the INS fraud charge, while MUHAMMAD KHALIL and MOHAMMAD AMIN AHMAD each face a maximum of 5 years in prison on the Social Security fraud charge.

Each of the defendants are scheduled to be presented on the charges in the Complaint before United States Magistrate Judge THEODORE H. KATZ later today.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. He said the investigation was continuing.

Mr. COMEY stated: "This Complaint sends the message that we will not tolerate attempts to subvert our country's immigration laws by fraudsters and con artists. The Religious Worker Program serves a valuable purpose, and these defendants took advantage of our country's history of religious tolerance in order to line their own pockets."

Assistant United States Attorneys EDWARD C. O'CALLAGHAN and DAVID P. BURNS are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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